REMARKS

This Reply is submitted in response to the Non-final Office Action dated July. Applicants would first like to thank the Examiner for discussing the case on October 14, 2008, and for considering the Applicants suggested amendment during the teleconference.

In the Non-final Office Action, the Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 1 – 2 and 5 – 6 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,415,527 issued to Rasenen et al. ("Räsänen"). In addition, claims 3 – 4 and 7 – 8 were again rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Räsänen in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,417,661 issued to Asman ("Asman"). Claim 1 is being amended, while claims 1 – 8 remain pending. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the amendments and remarks herein.

Applicants are amending claim 1 to clarify that "the heat transfer element is self-supported by a support structure that is fixedly connected to the longitudinal pipes." Support for this amendment can be found, in part, in paragraphs [0012] and [0013], which describe that the "pipes 8 are connected to the support structure 11, while FIG. 3 clearly shows how the support structure 11 is fixedly connected to the longitudinal pipes 8.

Applicants submit that the cited references, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach the arrangement of claim 1, as amended. In particular, and as

previously argued by the Applicants, Räsänen is directed to exactly the type of prior art that the pending claims look to improve upon. In particular, it is noted in the Background section of the pending application that there are prior art continuous steam driers that utilize a series of pipe elements attached to a support structure using a connection allowing heat expansion. *See Specification*, ¶ [0003]. Unfortunately, this results in the steam-containing pipes under pressure to abrade at the support point and lead to pipe wear. Räsänen similarly discloses that "[i]n the interior of the drum, support constructions **27** have been attached, to which support constructions each pipe element has been attached, for example, by means of screw joints **28** . . . which permit movement arising from thermal expansion of the pipe elements." *See Räsänen*, col. 4, ll. 37 – 43. As also previously noted for the Examiner, Figure 3B of Räsänen clearly shows that the screw joints **28** that "permit movement arising from thermal expansion" occur between the axial pipes **12a** and the support constructions **27**. The support construction **27** is then rigidly attached to the drum **11**.

In contrast, amended claim 1 recites that a "support structure [] is <u>fixedly</u> connected to the longitudinal pipes and the support structure is attached to the drum frame with fastening that allows heat expansion." Thus, the "abrading place in the drying apparatus is not an individual pipe but a support structure of the heat transfer element packet, connecting the drum frame with fastening that allows heat

expansion," as expressly noted in the pending application. *See Specification*, ¶ [0007].

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Räsänen, taken alone or in combination with Asman, fails to teach or suggest the arrangement of the pending claims. Additionally, dependent claims 2 – 8 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from an allowable base claim.

For at least the reasons stated above, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1 — 8 be withdrawn. If there are any questions regarding this response or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

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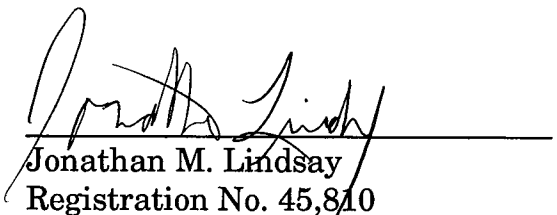

Jonathan M. Lindsay
Registration No. 45,810
Kimberley G. Nobles
Registration No. 38,255

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (949) 263-8400
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
JML/atb
DC6449339.1